

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----070228 171828Z /41
Z 171759Z AUG 77 ZFF 4
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 7226

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 23833

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM GERARD SMITH

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1, 2, 3
TAGS: PARM MNUC FR SF
SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR TEST ISSUE

REF: (A) STATE 194977; (B) STATE 194980

1. AMBASSADOR SMITH, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR HARTMAN, MET WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD, SECRETARY GENERAL SOUTOU, AND FRANCOIS-PONCET TO DISCUSS SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR ISSUE. SMITH LED OFF BY EXPRESSING GREAT APPRECIATION FOR THE PRESIDENT'S WILLINGNESS TO SEE HIM ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. HE STRESSED PRESIDENT CARTER'S GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA. HE HAD ASKED SMITH TO SEEK PRESIDENT GISCARD'S VIEWS AS TO NEXT STEPS. SMITH THEN GAVE THE BASIS FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S CONCERN, RECITING THE PREVIOUS EVIDENCE THAT WE HAD ABOUT WEAPONS ASSOCIATED WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA, NOW CROWNED BY EVIDENCE OBTAINED ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF WHAT LOOKS LIKE A TEST RANGE.

2. GISCARD WAS THEN SHOWN THE EVIDENCE ON WHICH AMERICAN CONCERN WAS BASED. HE ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE
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SOUTH AFRICAN INTENTIONS IN BUILDING SUCH A FACILITY. SMITH REPORTED THAT ONE SCHOOL OF OPINION IN US WAS THAT THE FACILITY MIGHT HAVE BEEN BUILT FOR BARGAINING PURPOSES TO EXTRACT CONCESSIONS IN RETURN FOR NO TESTS, BUT SMITH'S PERSONAL OPINION WAS THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD, ONCE THEY HAD A TESTING CAPACITY, USE IT FOR WHAT WOULD APPEAR TO THEM AS ITS DETERRENT

VALUE.

3. SMITH THEN ASKED GISCARD FOR HIS VIEWS ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE, POINTING OUT THAT WE HAD IN MIND DELIVERING A "WARNING SHOT" AT SAG EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN AND ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION. THE QUESTION THEN WAS WHAT, IN THE ABSENCE OF A CONVINCING SHOWING THAT THIS WAS NOT A TEST RANGE, SHOULD BE DONE.

4. GISCARD WAS AWARE OF OUR IDEA OF ASKING, IN THAT EVENT, TO HAVE A LOOK ON THE GROUND. ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH ARE WILLING TO TAKE FIRST STEP OF PARALLEL "WARNING SHOT," GISCARD WANTS MORE TIME TO CONSIDER ALL THE IMPLICATIONS OF A REQUEST TO INSPECT. HE SPECULATED ABOUT THE PRECEDENT THAT THIS MIGHT RAISE IN THE UN AND ELSEWHERE -- FOR EXAMPLE, THE ARABS MIGHT TRY A SIMILAR MOVE AND DEMAND INSPECTION IN ISRAEL.

5. GISCARD WENT ON TO WONDER ABOUT WHAT TO DO IF THE SAG, AS IS VERY LIKELY, MERELY DENIED ANY INTEREST IN OR CAPABILITY TO TEST A NUCLEAR DEVICE. HE ASKED WHAT OUR THINKING ON SANCTIONS WAS. SMITH EXPRESSED THE PERSONAL VIEW THAT EVEN, IN THE ABSENCE OF A TEST, THE PROSPECT OF CONTINUED US-SAG NUCLEAR COOPERATION WOULD BE VERY DIM IN SUCH AN EVENT AND HAZARDED THE GUESS THAT THE SAME WOULD APPLY TO ANY OTHER NUCLEAR
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SUPPLIERS OF THE SAG, INCLUDING EVEN A SUPPLIER OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS SUCH AS FRANCE. OUR IMPRESSION WAS THAT WHILE GISCARD AGREES THAT ALL SUPPLIERS WOULD BE IN SAME BOAT IN EVENT OF ACTUAL TEST, HE FEELS THAT THE EXISTENCE OF A TEST RANGE BY ITSELF WOULD NOT RESULT IN OVERWHELMING PRESSURE TO END FRENCH COOPERATION. THIS LAST CONCLUSION WAS SOMEWHAT MODIFIED BY GISCARD'S STRONGLY EXPRESSED VIEWS AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION THAT HE SHARED THE PRESIDENT'S CONCERN AND WISHED TO EXAMINE WHAT EFFECTIVE NEXT STEPS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. FOR EXAMPLE, HE WONDERED WHETHER A SECOND STEP SHOULD AVOID A REQUEST FOR INSPECTION BUT RATHER PROCEED DIRECTLY TO A DEMAND THAT THE FACILITY BE DISMANTLED. HE SAID THAT THIS MIGHT MODERATE SOUTH AFRICAN FEELINGS OF VIOLATION OF THEIR SOVEREIGNTY ENTAILED IN DIRECT INSPECTION BY FOREIGN EXPERTS. IN ANY CASE, IF THE INSPECTION PROVED THE FACILITY TO BE A NUCLEAR TEST RANGE, DISMANTLING SHOULD BE OUR NEXT REQUEST. IT IS OBVIOUSLY THIS KIND

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NODIS/CHEROKEE

OF QUESTION THAT GISCARD WISHED TO STUDY FURTHER AND
HAVE ADDITIONAL EXCHANGES ON PRIOR TO DECIDING ON
COMMON ACTION BEYOND THE WARNING PHASE.

6. THE FRENCH HAD NO SPECIFIC COMMENT TO MAKE ON OUR
TEXT (PARAS 3A-C IN STATE 194980) WHICH WE GAVE TO
SOUTOU EARLIER. THEY WILL PLAN TO MAKE THEIR PARALLEL
APPROACH IN SIMILAR BUT NOT IDENTICAL LANGUAGE AS SOON
AS TOMORROW. GISCARD ASKED THAT WE REMAIN IN TOUCH
ON RESPONSES GIVEN US AND ANY FURTHER IDEAS ON NEXT
STEPS.

7. GISCARD'S OFFICE HAD ANNOUNCED AMBASSADOR SMITH'S
CALL AND AS THE AMBASSADOR WAS LEAVING THE ELYSEE HE
WAS ASKED BY PRESS THE SUBJECT OF HIS CALL. THE PRESS
WAS TOLD THAT THIS WAS A PART OF A CONTINUING EXCHANGE
WHICH STEMMED FROM DISCUSSION OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION
ISSUE AT LONDON SUMMIT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS LINE
BE ADHERED TO AND NO INDICATION OF SPECIFIC SUBJECT
MATTER BE REVEALED.

8. AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN DISCUSSION WAS CONCLUDED
GISCARD ADVISED SMITH OF THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHED
TO THE INFCEP.

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9. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.

HARTMAN

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